

From:

Ambuj Trivedi,
39370 Mozart Terr.
Fremont, CA 94538
21th March, 2016.

To:

Instructional Quality Commission,
Department of Education,
Sacramento, CA

RE: CHSSP's Comment 2501 To Remove Hinduism's Profound Acceptance of Religious Diversity. Is IQC Going To Consider CHSSP's Blatant Denial of Reality?

Very recently I've learnt that various comments which attempt to demean Hinduism have been submitted to IQC for California State's History and Social Sciences Framework. Though I differ with many of the comments, but here I am specifically referring to CHSSP's comment # 2501, page 214, lines 860-864.

Current text says "Many of the central practices of Hinduism today, including home and temple worship, yoga and meditation, rites of passage (samskaras), festivals, pilgrimage, respect for saints and gurus, and, above all, a profound acceptance of religious diversity, developed over this period."

Suggested change (by South Asian faculty) says: "Many of the central practices of Hinduism today, including home and temple worship, yoga and meditation, rites of passage (samskaras), festivals, pilgrimage, and respect for saints and gurus, developed over this period."

It is very unfortunate to read the sweeping statements from CHSSP like: "We recommend deleting a "profound acceptance for religious diversity" from the above sentence as there was much internal conflict and persecution among sects during the Vedic Period which eventually contributed to the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism".

I call upon every members of IQC commission to please **REJECT** this suggestion. Being a parent I do not want my kids to build any wrong impression of any religion. I want my kids to see everything with open mind without any biases and learn the true reality as opposed to biased judgmental opinions without any facts. I request the community to determine the validity of such claims and weigh them against the reality. These claims reject the key aspect of Hindu thought: religious pluralism. Below are some of the points I would like to make in support of my request:

1. There are numerous places where Hindu scriptures talk about profound acceptance of diversity. One prominent example could be found in Rigveda 1:164:46: "Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti"- Truth is one; sages call it by many names.

2. We do not necessarily need to go to ancient scriptures to understand the true nature of Hindu culture. Supreme Court of India has included this statement in its definition of Hindu religion “recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse.”
3. India, where Hindu dharma started and thrived over centuries, has been home to so many religions and their related sects. According to 2001 census (http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/religion.aspx), India is still home to followers from most of the major religions. Core lies in Hindu beliefs. Over the period of time many religions born out of mainstream Hinduism and prospered equally along with others. Nowhere else in the world one could find other religions being carved out without any major clashes. Hindus did not have to crucify Buddha and Mahavir Jain to yield another religion. Instead it believes in continuous evolution. Several religions, like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were born out of Hinduism as part of such continuous evolution.
4. Those claiming internal conflicts and persecution to be reasons for generation of these new religions need to revisit the history and understand why founders of those religions have established them. Without any persecution or conflict those religious leaders put forth noble ideas to lead one's life, which eventually shaped into new religious names. This was welcomed and accepted by the society wholeheartedly. Chandragupta Maurya, the first emperor of Mauryan dynasty, was born Hindu embraced Jain-ism ([web link](#)). Ashoka the great, another emperor of Mauryan dynasty, also embraced Buddhism ([web link](#)). The idea of diverse ways to lead your life and attain salvation has always been there.
5. With deep philosophical and scientific roots, Hinduism has never been threatened by other faiths and beliefs thriving alongside it. Infact it has been tested multiple times by various hostile rulers who openly encouraged religious conversions (Mughal dynasty and Jaziah, many books, one example: [History of Nations](#)).
6. Among other religions originated in India, it still hosts about 90% of worldwide Sikh population ([wiki link](#)) and pretty much entire Jain population ([wiki link2](#)). Followers of Buddhism are still finding refuge in India after atrocities on them in China occupied Tibbet ([wiki link3](#) and [wiki link4](#)).
7. Followers of other religions which originated elsewhere, were also welcome with open hands by Hindu community ([Qissa-i-sanjan](#) early Zoroastrian settlers in India). Some accounts even suggest India has one of the oldest Church in the world ([St Thomas church of Malabar](#)). India is probably the only place where you would find all seven sects of Islam ([wiki link 5](#)) living peacefully with mainstream Hindu society.
8. Unlike most other religion, in Hinduism there is no secret to god instead it lies within each and every individuals (Bhagwat Gita Shloka 66).
9. Hindu thoughts even have place for Atheistic ideology ([Nasadiya Sukta of Rigveda 10:129](#)). It is such profound Hindu culture and its practices which influenced even invaders like Alexander.

It is no secret that Hindus in greater and broader India have always coexisted peacefully with rest of the society. This too when Hinduism has always been a non-proselytizing Dharma. It is

such evolutionary and adaptive nature of Hinduism which kept it flourishing for (atleast) more than five thousand years. I am concerned over the comments by CHSSP and request the IQC members to weigh them against reality. I request for more investigation and scrutiny.

I trust you shall make thorough and careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Ambuj Trivedi

39370 Mozart Terr,

Fremont, CA 94538